

REMARKS

Initially, applicant would like to thank Examiner Kim for granting an interview and for his time spent during the interview. Applicant would also like to thank Supervisory Patent Examiner Thai for attending the interview and for her input during the interview.

The application has been amended consistent with what was discussed at the interview to place the application in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Claims 1-20 were previously pending in the application. Claim 4 is canceled; leaving claims 1-3 and 5-20 for consideration.

Claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as anticipated by INOUE 5,395,111. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to clarify that the controller controls the outer reel to stop after rotating in both a normal and a reverse direction repeatedly within a range that a winning symbol remains displayed.

As pointed out at the interview, by way of example, page 12, lines 18-29 of the present application discloses that CPU 91 rotates outer reel 26 in a normal direction until the symbol "target" 41 is displayed on the winning line 13. Thereafter, the CPU 91 rotates the outer reel 26 in a reverse direction, which is the opposite direction to the normal

direction, until the symbol "target" 41 is displayed on the winning line 11. The outer reel 26 carries out the rotation in the normal and in the reverse directions repeatedly within a range that a second symbol is displayed in the display window.

Thus, in this embodiment, it is the outer reel that rotates in both the normal and reverse directions within a range that the second symbol is displayed in the display window.

As set forth at the interview, column 3, lines 39-44 of INOUE disclose stepping motors 20a-22a for rotating inner reels 5a to 7a in one direction, for example, a forward direction and that the rotation direction of the stepping motors 20b-22b, which rotates outer reels 5b to 7b is opposite to the rotation direction of the stepping motors 20a-22a.

Thus, one reel (inner reel) of INOUE is rotated in a first direction (forward), and the second reel (outer reel) is rotated in an opposite direction (reverse). INOUE fails to suggest that the same reel, for example the outer reel, is rotated alternatively in both the forward and reverse directions. Rather, the inner and outer reels of INOUE rotate continuously in the same direction, but in the opposite directions to each other.

As INOUE does not disclose that which is recited, the anticipation rejection is not viable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 2-10 depend from claim 1 and further define the invention and are believed to define over INOUE at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

Independent claim 11 is amended and recites that the controller controls the inner reel to stop after rotating in both a normal and a reverse direction repeatedly within a range that the winning symbol remains displayed in the display window, or the controller controls the outer reel to stop rotating in both a normal and a reverse directions repeatedly within a range that said second symbol remains displayed in said display window before win or loss of said game is determined. As set forth above, the reel of INOUE, for example, the inner reel continuously rotates in the forward direction. INOUE does not disclose rotation of the same reel in both forward and reverse directions.

The analysis above regarding claim 1 is equally applicable to claim 11. Claims 12-13 depend from claim 11 and further define the invention and are also believed patentable at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

As pointed out at the interview, claim 14 is written in 35 USC §112, sixth paragraph means-plus-function format and requires that the applied prior art discloses the same structural or an equivalent structure that performs the exact recited function of controlling rotation of either the inner (or outer)

reel to rotate in both a normal and a reverse direction repeatedly as disclosed on page 12, lines 18-29.

As set forth above, INOUE discloses rotating one reel in a first direction and a second reel in an opposite direction. INOUE does not disclose rotating the same reel in a normal direction and a reverse direction repeatedly. Accordingly, claims 14 and 15-20 which depend therefrom, are believed patentable over INOUE.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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